SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

7th Year — March 26, 1973

No 191

Address: HT 1217 B-SVN
c/o DAZIMINA HANOI
19, Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi, DRVN
and all RSVN Embassies, Information Bureaux in foreign countries

CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

editorial

The US at the crossroads

its aggression, which is still now perfectly legible with its present mounting troubles. It is clear that it is finding itself at the crossroads : either strictly abide by the Paris Agreement or continue its military involvement.

ON March 27, 1973, under the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, the American withdrawal from South Viet Nam will be completed. The event is of great moment, for it will basically mark the end of US military involvement in Viet Nam, of US aggression against South Viet Nam and of foreign invaders' century-old presence in our territory. It will also usher in a new historical stage leading to a lasting peace, complete independence and democracy and eventual peaceful reunification of the country.

A week earlier, our nation as a whole commemorated the 23rd "Nationwide Anti-US Resistance Day," which is a red-letter date in our people's national liberation movement, and which has gone down as the first rebuff to a US show of the flag in South Viet Nam.

AS a matter of fact, our confrontation with the US imperialists had taken place many years prior to March 19, 1950. As early as in the Second World War, they wanted to wade in and check our people's drive. Having failed in this scheme they then turned to helping French colonialism stage a comeback. When the latter was defeated, they resorted to open intervention and aggression, broke into South Viet Nam, installed there a regime of their making, set up the aggressive SEATO, challenging the 1954 Geneva Agreements and embarked on a neo-colonialist adventure first with a unilateral war, a special war, a limited war then a "Vietnamized" war. Such an escalation in war strategies brought about a grim battle between US imperialism and our people who finally emerged victorious from it, with the signing of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam. Under the terms of this accord, the US is bound to terminate all US military involvement, respect our people's fundamental national rights, namely independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination.

Thus the US design to turn the southern part of our country into a US neo-colony and military base was frustrated, a setback which revealed the limitations of US might and US inability to crush our people's drive for national liberation and to act as an international gendarme in this area.

BUT up to now, it has still been reluctant to give up its sinister intentions which date back to the second world conflagration and our August Revolution. This explains why the fighting is still going on though the Paris Agreement has been in force for two months. Under the US plans, Saigon troops daily stage inroads, pacification operations, police actions and the Thieu administration is deliberately delaying the return of our military personnel and refusing to release our civilian personnel, as provided for by the Paris Accord. Meanwhile the US has not strictly observed its stipulations concerning the troop pull-out and the dismantling of US military bases. It has left no stone unturned to keep its military personnel under various guises, enlarge its consular network and strengthen its Embassy staff to serve as a kind of command and bring in illegally armaments for the Saigon regime. It has been dawdling in the mine-disposing job in the DRVN sea and river areas and flown reconnaissance flights over its territorial waters and airspace. Quite recently President Nixon even indulged in some sabre-rattling, while trying to maintain the Thieu rule as an agent to continue US neo-colonialism.

Due to all the above, the present situation is a very serious one which is at utter variance with the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement. It is indubitably indicative of the US ugly mood.

It seems that the US fire-eaters have not seen the writing on the wall during

THE South Vietnamese just like the Vietnamese as a whole are resolved to honour their pledges But they are no less determined to fight until independence and democracy are fully achieved and ultimate peaceful reunification realized. In face of the US playing with fire, they will remain always on their guard, ready to foil all its attempts to preserve its neo-colonialist rule in South Viet Nam. They are aware that the present juncture is in their favour. The posture and strength of their revolution is more powerful than ever. Other revolutionary forces in the world are behind them. Our sense of purpose and capability is firm enough to deal with all US underhand manœuvres and make our just cause triumph.

SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

An honourable way-out for the US:

GI's withdrawing under the control and supervision of the Four-Party JMC

"TIGER CAGE" survivors speak out

We are reprinting below AFP *Saigon correspondent Roland Pierre Paringaux's dispatch quoting "Con Son (Poulo Condor Island) prison survivors' evidence."*

Late in February 1973, 124 "*pro-communist*" *inmates held for years at Con Son (formely Poulo Condor) were secretly freed by the Saigon authorities, without negotiation, without witnesses, under the ban on returning to Saigon and particularly on metting newspaper people. The* AFP *correspondent was able within a few days to find out two groups totalling* 14 *survivors. Two of them were taken into custody ten years ago, under Ngo Dinh Diem and the others after his downfall. All agreed to speak up freely, giving their names. Their tales which differed only in a few details were identical and horrifying*—Ed.

TO move they had to crawl on the ground. Their arms and their entire bodies were skeletal and their legs wasted away, insensitive, covered with deep scars from irons and chains which secured them for years in overcrowded tiny cells of horrendous repute: the "tiger cages" of the jail of Con Son Island.

Many showed the following paper, the only one in their possession and bearing an ID mug:

"M... born... at..., son of Mr and Mrs captured by the Command of the National Police of... for illegal demonstration and possession of weapons was detained at Con Son for... years and released on February 20, 1973 under the release act number... of February 20, 1973. The person concerned is requested to report every month at the... police station. Done at Bien Hoa on February 20, 1973." Follow signatures and seals of the Command of the National Police.

The 14 prisoners had been examined some days after their release by a US civilian doctor, John Champlin. A former Air Force medic, Dr Champlin had spent nearly four years in South Viet Nam. He spoke Vietnamese. Here is his diagnosis, after examination of the 14 men in a pagoda where they had been left, in an advanced state of debility.

"I saw fourteen of the 124," he said. "I had only time to examine half of the lot. Not only were their legs crippled but also insensitive. There was generalized atrophy of muscles due, on the strength of my observation done without any special instruments, to many factors: severe nutritional deficiency namely of vitamines B and deterioration of the nerves which had lost their function from stoppage of movements. The paralysis had started after 4 or 5 months. Some were stiff at the level of the pelvis, other lower. Many local traumatisms were noticed, probably caused by repeated blows and ankle wounds, apparently produced by irons.

It was no case of poliomelitis: their legs were wasted away but the bone structure was normally developed. Some might recover the use of their legs after long treatment and care hard to obtain in South Viet Nam. Their lungs were apparently ruined. Several affirmed they had TB. They had intestinal troubles due to the food, which they said consisted of rotten rice swarming with worms. They believed their lungs had been ruined by the lime the guards used to soak them with."

Such wounds, scars and symptoms were obvious to even lay men, when in presence of those Con Son survivors.

On the other hand, their morale, with the exception for two who had partly lost their memory, remained amazingly high. They told in an even and anger-free voice the vicissitudes of their life as prisoners, the tortures, the beatings and often the names of those who had taken part in the brutalities, also those of their cell mates who could not stand the ordeal. Thirteen were from South Viet Nam, the last one was a Sino-Vietnamese who styled himself as a "Vietnamese nationalist sympathetic to the Liberation forces."

The first was 41. He was a worker. He was arrested with his wife and his two children (4 years and 18 months) on June 26, 1967 in Saigon. He specified that "he has been politically active in Buddhist movements since 1955 for the implementation of the Geneva Accords." He was arrested after a demonstration against US intervention in Viet Nam.

Brought to a Tan Son Nhut district (Saigon airport) police station, he and his wife were separately put to various kinds of torture. They were charged with being communists. The children witnessed the brutalities inflicted on their pregnant mother who eventually had a miscarriage. "It lasted twelve days and twelve nights," said the man. He coldly listed a whole range of atrocities: electric shock applied to ears, feet and privy parts, hanging by the feet and beatings, immersion in a suds-filled barrel, breaking of fingers.

He seemed to have recorded the smallest details. He gave the names of five Vietnamese officers (of the Saigon administration) who conducted the sessions and added that an American was present.

His wife was eventually held for 18 months when freed and put under surveillance. Until the end of February 1973, he had had no news either from her or from his relatives.

For him like for many others of his group, the next stage, they said, was the "Army Security Department" in the heart of Saigon, near the Zoo. The torture was resumed: blocking in of face in an apparatus, eyes wide open in front of a powerful light. US civilians were often in attendance, he affirmed.

"I ended by signing everything they wanted me to sign, owning everything I had never done. But I always refused to spit on President Ho Chi Minh's name. Before my arrest, I wanted that all he had said become a reality in the South," he specified.

His comrades similarly did not hide their violent anti-government feeling. All affirmed that they had refused to recognize the successive US-supported governments, despite the torture. One was captured in 1963, "with arms in hand." He was sent to Con Son, because, he said, there was no other regime then for POW's.

The first prisoner spent afterwards many months in a police jail, Vo Tanh street, in Saigon, confined to a cell and frequently beaten up, "whenever they liked," he said.

One day of 1968, with twenty other civilians, he was put onboard a DC-3 which took them to Con Son prison. On their landing they were cudgelled by "hooligans", common law offenders. It was his first contact with the place where he was held until February 1973 in a tiger cage, with only one interval.

His detailed story and that of his comrades interviewed separately did not differ one iota in regard to the "life" and treatment inflicted on "pro-communist" detainees crammed into two 30-cage rows, facing each other, in the same building of Camp no 4. Other rows of "tiger cages" would be from 1967 on meant for women.

This is their picture of the cells: 2.5 meters by 1.5. meters, thick stone walls, a sandy floor, and on top irons bars on which a wooden catwalk was thrown for the guards to make their rounds on. In the cages which accommodated up to eight inmates, they were permanently chained by the feet to a transversal iron bar. Many died, they said, and, among the women, turned insane, getting into terrible fits day and night.

They all pointed out to the excessive cruelty of hundreds of common law prisonners "sold out" to the camp authorities who used them for menial jobs and for hitting the captives: "They lived only for forturing and killing," they said.

Piled up the ones upon the others, they were not allowed to speak, to sit down nor to stand up, under pain of sound hidings. From the top, through the bars, the guards frequently splashed down lime which burned their skin and got into their eyes and lungs. Sometimes they were pricked at random with sharpened bamboos. The common law criminals who had to empty the sanitary buckets—there was one in each cell who theoretically had to empty them everyday—sometimes spread the waste on the sandy floor. The inmates could not do nor say anything about it.

"Sometimes," said one of the survivors, "we were so hungry, we were so thirsty that the weakest drank out of the toilet bucket. Caught in the act, they were hit." The food according to them was most scanty: a few handfuls of mouldy rice crawling with worms, bits of fish and dry cuttle fish, as hard as wood and some mouthfuls of water. Once a week they were "entitled" to a bath: a tub of water thrown on the whole of a cage. All medical care for any illness consisted of either an aspirin tablet or a thorough thrashing, "to cure you". The "meals" were issued at eight a.m. and at 2 p.m. Three minutes for the eating and a "gap" of 18 hours before the next ration.

In June 1970, said one of the survivors, after the visit of a group of American civilians who had taken pictures (it was a senatorial delegation) we were taken out of the "tiger cages" and packed into old partitioned stables. "But," he added, "the treatment remained unchanged and so did the food. The only improvement was a little more room for us to stretch out."

A few months later, new "tiger cages" were ready, built with US aid and credits. About the same size as the former one, they now had a closed top and were as hot as hell. At least, the inmates were no longer in chains and each had the "right" to occupy an individual cell. The cages were divided into eight groups of 48 cages each. The general treatment would not be altered until their release in February 1973.

Many times, some of the survivors mentioned rebellions. These erupted because their hunger became unbearable or because too many immates had previously died for lack of care. The biggest mutiny occurred in October 1972. Handicapped by their imprisonment and physical condition, they were easily and harshly put down by the guards and the common law offenders with as an inevitable result many dead and wounded. One of the men however asserted that once a cell had killed with bare hands one of the most wicked keepers, nicknamed "Muoi O."

They remembered perfectly well the names of their jailers and torturers, and those of their comrades who had died:

→

"On January 8, 1973, they beat to death bonze Thich Hanh Tue, 38, who had been for years .protesting against all such a barbarous and inhuman treatment and militating for peace. All the cages' population howled for hours for care for him. He was removed two hours after his death."

All expected to die at Con Son. "I knew," said the first survivor, "the odds against me were 99 to 1. But I preferred to die like that rather than live under this regime. Ho Chi Minh was right: Thieu does not represent the Vietnamese people".

Another prisoner aged 30 had been held since November 11, 1963 and at Con Son since June 1965. A militant Buddhist, he had gone through, he affirmed, a trial of "some minutes where the counsel said nothing and the witnesses were plain clothes policemen." At the Thanh Hiep prison, near Saigon, he had experienced the "grave", a dark and narrow box where he had been thrown in chains after the torture. In the "grave," he said, "my injured head couldn't bear the flight of a fly which would sound like a roaring engine under the skull." He had known the "cimema hall" of the Chi Hoa jail (Saigon main prison) where the "pro-communists" were put to the third degree.

Always chained, he was put onboard a Con Son-bound ship with 500 other civilians in June 1965. "On our arrival," he related, "after a beating by common law criminals, we were lined up in front of a flag. Those who accepted to salute it went to one side, those who refused to the other. We were about 80 recalcitrants."

First, he was confined to a cellar for nearly two years... "Six months later we could no longer walk. Out of 25 inmates of this place, ten survived. In mid-1967, we were loaded on a lorry and transferred to "tiger cages." For years he shuttled between "tiger cages" and cells (bigger) in a stable also of the French time and refitted since for the prisoners. "Sometimes we were able to have a wash once a week. Sometimes we had to wait two months" he said.

124 prisoners were released discreetly and unofficially. The Saigon administration by doing so wanted to get rid of embarrassing witnesses before, as stipulated by the Paris Agreement, international commissions could take a look at their physical condition and hear their stories.

But according to official sources, there are still nearly 9,000 detainees in the 8 camps of the island. The Saigon regime does not grant the civilians the "political detainee" status. Its spokesman stated on February 5 that "there are no political detainees in South Viet Nam."

However, the International Commission for Control and Supervision (Canada, Hungary, Poland and Indonesia) and the Four-Party Joint Military Commission have just received, care of associations struggling for the release of political detainees, a "letter from 8,000 political prisoners at Con Son" with name-lists attached.

The letter chiefly dwells on the treatment the prisoners continue to undergo, despite the formal clauses of the Paris Agreement signed by the Saigon government. The details of the treatment described in the letter are similar to those revealed in this article by the 14 survivors of the "tiger cages."

When Washington and Saigon set free these children, according to Article 8 of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam ?

Returns of captured US military and civilian personnel

by the PRG:

The Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, handed over to the United States as the third batch, 32 more of its captured military and civilian personnel at Gia Lam international airport in Hanoi on March 16, 1973.

The proceedings were witnessed by the ICCS and the Four-Party JMC, and a large number of Vietnamese and foreign journalists, including American newsmen.

Most of the returnees were in good health. Many of them, seriously wounded at the time of their capture, had been attended to by the PRG. They all expressed gratitude for the kind treatment by combatants of the Liberation Army.

The returnees included 25 field and company officers and non-coms, men of the Air Force, the Marines and the Army and technical personnel.

27 of them had been reported killed or missing by the US government in 1968. The youngest was Ronald L. Ridgeway, PFC, Texas. When he was captured in Khe Sanh, Quang Tri province, on Feb. 23, 1968, he was only 18 years old. Last year, his mother received a coffin, which she believed was containing the body of her son and which she buried in St. Louis. What a surprise it must be to her when the name Ronald L. Ridgeway cropped up in the list of captured American military and civilian personnel communicated by the RSVN PRG to the US government following the signing of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam!

Ridgeway was the youngest but the happiest man of the whole batch. He said he was an only son and that he had all the time anticipated the joy when he could finally be reunited with his family.

It is safe to say that Ridgeway's feeling is shared by all those American servicemen who were forced to fight an unjust, dirty war conducted to enrich the rulers of their country.

That the "death" of captured American servicemen was taken for granted was understandable: the US government was well aware that it was sending its men to death. But many of those "reported killed in action" have come home, thanks to the generosity of the Vietnamese people. Some of them even brought back graceful conic palm-leaf hats as souvenirs for their relatives.

The return and reception lasted half an hour in strict observance of the procedures agreed on. The ICCS and the Four-Party JMC, after visiting the last place of detention and witnessing the return, all declared that everything was all right.

The statement on the return and reception was signed by the head delegates of the two sides in the presence of members of the ICCS and the Four-Party JMC, and moments later the C.141 N° 50280 carrying the returnees took off from the airport for the Philippines.

by the DRVN:

The 4th batch of captured US military and civilian personnel was returned by the DRVN on March 14 at Gia Lam Airport. It consisted of 107 military men and one civilian— 3 colonels, 10 lieutnant-colonels, 36 majors, 31 captains, 26 lieutnants and a second lieutnant. The operation started at 1,30 p.m. and lasted just one hour in the presence of International Commission and Four-Party Joint Military Commission Teams. The first release was made on February 2.

Western correspondents were allowed to film the detention camp and its wards. A *UPI* correspondent coming from Saigon expressed surprise at seeing that the camp looked like a block of ordinary houses in Hanoi streets. It totally differed from detention camps of the Saigon administration, she said.

All the personnel returned were in good health and properly dressed. Many among were manifestly moved before leaving for the airport. Carl Chambers told a responsible official of the camp that the several years he had spent there helped him understand that the Vietnamese people had made great sacrifices in the fight for their independence and they had devoted part of their material resources to feed and take care of them. Chambers asked for a suit and a one *dong* note (DRVN currency) with President Ho Chi Minh's effigy as souvenirs.

Of the American personnel returned this time, 36% were seriously injured when they touched down. All of these had their wounds attended to by Vietnamese doctors John Peter Flynn, a colonel who had his right thigh and left knee sinews broken when captured in Hanoi on October 27, 1967, had been success-fully treated. He said later on in the camp, "I can play football now." John McCain Jr, a major and son of the former commander of the US armed forces in the Pacific, had his arms and right knee sinews fractured and his clavicles very seriously sprained. Vietnamese doctors had helped him keep his arms and legs.

When the hand-over came to an end, US representative James Dennett said he thanked very much the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam for the efficient organization of the whole affair.

New life in the liberated zone

Peace and joy come back in each family of liberated Loc Ninh district capital

*

Urgent medical cares for the health of the population in Loc Ninh

*

The Loc Ninh market place busy and bustling again

Saigon incursions duly punished

IN an attempt to survive as a US neo-colonialist rule, the Saigon administration has been more and more brazenly violating the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam which has been in force seven weeks now.

Flouting the stipulations of the cease-fire and implementing its "land grabbing" policy, it has deployed units from all its armed forces, from regular army, security forces to civil guards and police, into about 15,000 operations of various sizes on the liberated areas. Gun reports are heard everyday. In such provinces as Quang Tri, Quang Da, Quang Ngai, My Tho and Can Tho, there are up to 20 operations everyday—some of them of division size, with air and armour cover, as part of a systematic extermination drive. During these raids, the enemy burn all, destroy all and flatten all. In localities like Duy Xuyen, Dai Loc (Quang Da), Sa Huynh, Duc Pho (Quang Nam), Tay Ninh (Cao Dai Holy See), Cai Lay, Cai Be (My Tho)... they have levelled at a time a dozen hamlets in the PRG-controlled areas, and inflict thousands of civilian casualties.

All those breaches have given rise to a most serious situation in South Viet Nam and run counter to our people's fondest aspiration for peace, independence, freedom, democracy and national reconciliation and concord.

The southern people who long for peace and are eager to implement all the provisions of the Paris Agreement to secure a lasting peace and the three categories of arms of the people's army who are constantly vigilant and combat ready have foiled all the Saigon illegal actions, to defend the liberated areas.

Thus the major raid launched by Marine Brigade 147, together with armour squadrons No 17, 18 and 20 on the port of Cua Viet on January 28, 29, 30 and 31, were beaten off by the Quang Tri armed forces and people. The Saigon army had a considerable part of its manpower and equipment wiped out in three days.

After that bitter failure, the Saigon paratroops and marines continued to encroach upon the liberated zone at Tinh Tuong, Nhu Le and Hill 52, but they were duly punished. On Hill 52 alone (southwest of Tinh Tuong), the Paras took 200 casualties on March 5, 6 and 7, 1973.

In Central South Viet Nam, the enemy in Kontum, Gia Lai, Darlac, Phu Xuyen, Binh Dinh, Quang Ngai, Quang Nam, Quang Da, paid dear for their outright violations of the cease-fire. Within one month or so in west Duy Xuyen, Dai Loc and Dien Ban (Quang Da province) they suffered over 2,300 men killed or wounded and 34 tanks and armoured carriers destroyed. In Kontum, all the four operations made on the same day by one or two battalions of Division 23 north and southwest of Kontum town were fought back with hundreds of adverse casualties.

Especially, on the Nam Bo battlefield, as soon as the Paris Agreement came into force, the Saigon administration hurled all its armed forces in abortive forays.

In the first fortnight of February 1973, our armed forces in Bien Hoa, Thu Dau Mot and Phuoc Long intercepted multibattalion units 43 and 48 of Saigon Division 18 engaged in a raid, putting out of action 14,000 men and many armoured vehicles. Meanwhile, in My Tho, Ben Tre, Kien Tuong (Central Nam Bo), Vinh Long, Soc Trang, Rach Gia, Ca Mau (West Nam Bo) the units of Divisions 7, 9 and 21 and the security force and police indulding in encroaching, looting and impressing operations, sustained over 2,000 casualties (many companies written off). On February 25, the Can Tho armed forces knocked out 4 companies of the Saigon regular and security forces during the latter's assault on Xa Phien (Long My) and Ninh Hoa (Phuoc Long district).

In dealing with such enemy violation, the local people have closely coordinated action with the PLAF, stepped up political action and successfully carried out agitation work among enemy troops

In such places as Quang Tri, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai particularly in almost all the provinces in the Mekong delta, after listening to the people's patient briefing about the Paris Agreement, thousands of Saigon troops strongly opposed marching orders, threw away their weapons and returned home. In My Tho, Vinh Long, Kien Tuong and Long An, in March 1973, over 400 men of the Saigon army crossed over to the people's side.

There is no doubt the South Vietnamese people and Liberation Forces have fully observed the cease-fire and with great restraint only tried to curb the provocations of the Saigon troops, with the resolve not to let their territory be encroached upon.

Meanwhile, they have been building their areas with a great sense of urgency, and setting up revolutionary power, ready to face all eventuality and resolutely force the other party to strictly implement the Agreement.

Though under fire from progressive opinion and blows from the South Vietnamese people, the Saigon administration, aided and abetted by the US is not yet willing to give up its intention of sabotaging the agreement, on the contrary it is going on with its incursions and brutal "pacification" program.

The South Vietnamese people cherish peace; they are eager to let bygones be bygones and to implement a national reconciliation and concord policy, that is why they avoid at any cost all internecine armed conflict. But they are resolved not to tolerate all those who take advantage of the patriots' desire for peace to blatantly violate the agreement, undermine peace and murder people.

In its statement dated February 25, 1973, the PRG of the RSVN made clear its unshakable will to strictly and thoroughly implement all the provisions of the Paris Agreement and resolutely not let pass any sabotage attempt of the Saigon administration as well as the US government. Both of these must entirely be responsible for any consequences resulting from their deliberate violations of the Paris Agreement.

The opening of a new school

THE temple of Ha Thuong was in effervescence that day. People streamed there from all the villages of Gio Linh, accompanying their children, nephews or nieces, brothers or sisters, to attend the opening ceremony held by the first school of the district.

Boys and girls in new clothes were merrily playing in the schoolyard. Beside bodhi trees and melias with their first blossoms of the year, a dozen PRG flags were fluttering in the warm sunshine.

Under the curved, ancient-style roof, fellow-villagers told one another stories about the temple. Gazing at the flags with a yellow star on a red and blue background, old men and women from Gio Le, Gio Hai, Gio Son and other places recounted episodes of the 1945 August Revolution, how at that time Gio Linh inhabitants seized power with spades and sticks. Girl guerillas related what they had seen at the exhibition, put up at this temple by liberation troops, of M.41 and M.48 tanks and other materiel supplied by the Americans to Saigon forces to recapture Cua Viet base after the cease-fire.

Addressing the crowd in that ebullient atmosphere, Tran Minh Thu, chief of the Educational Bureau of Gio Linh said: "A little more than a month after the restoration of peace, we have primary schools in all the villages of Gio Linh district, and thousands of our children attending their classes. The number of schools and class-rooms are increasing, and in ten days 100 per cent of our children of school age will be able to attend classes. We are now opening complementary education classes."

A round of drum beating marked the beginning of the celebrations. It also ended twenty years of suffering and oppression, and heralded in a new era.

In the eyes of fathers and mothers, one could read their gratitude to the people's revolutionary power as they intensely gazed at their children receiving each a pile of exercise-books of fragrant newly-made paper. Many of them and representatives of people's organizations were obviously very moved as they heard little boys and girls sing *On the Way to Uncle's Homeland*. They thought of the great cherished leader that President Ho was, of all those who had made it possible for their children to assemble and learn in enthusiasm today.

"For over a year that I have been teaching," Phan Huy Luu, one of those who had the honour to start the first class after the opening ceremony, confided, "Never have I had so deep a feeling as today. As a revolutionary teacher, a teacher bred by the people, I pledge to do all I can to contribute to foster our children into men with a good knowledge and health, men who will, in national reconciliation and concord, build our liberated district into a prosperous one."

Cua Viet's new vitality

GROUPS of a dozen motor-boats were gliding on the Hieu Giang River, cutting through the waves. Ours was also heading for Cua Viet, the newly liberated port that had just successfully foiled a violation of the Paris Agreement by the Saigon fire-eaters. On both banks of the river, hamlets devastated by US bombs and shells were like patches of a forest of flags fluttering in the sun.

The rivers' confluence was the most bustling place. In boats coming upstream from Gio Linh to Dong Ha, villagers shouted to us through their hands cupped into megaphones: "Hello! Liberation fighters, don't forget to pick up some tracks of US armoured vehicles as Tet presents for us!" or "Please give our congratulations to our fellow-countrymen over there!"

Our hearts were filled with an indescribable joy. It was spring time, and the day was sunny and warm, with gusts of wind coming from the sea. A red and blue flag resplendent with its golden star towered above the port area. All along the sea coast from Cua Viet to Thanh Hoi, carcasses of M.48's M.41's, M.113's were lying pell mell, some of them brand new with tracks entirely broken. Three-striped Saigon flags, spotted uniforms, cartridge-belts of all kinds and graduation certificates belonging to tank drivers of armoured regiments N° 17 and 20 littered the sand, tossed up and down by sea waves. The liaison agent of the provincial army who acted as our guide, noticing our careful examination of the terrain and guessing that we were interested in getting full information of what had happened, took us to a main force unit that had been fighting ever since in this area.

At the Commanding post of A unit, we met Comrade Nguyen Huu Cuong the CO. Spreading a military map on his table, he began his story in an enthusiastic voice:

"Our unit was garrisoned to defend Cua Viet port which had been liberated three months before the cease-fire. Many a time, Saigon marines and paratroopers supported by US artillery and air force, had made incursions, but were fought back. So before the cease-fire came into effect, Cua Viet was completely rid of enemy.

"On January 28, the historic Victory Day of our nation, our men mingling with the local people, gleefully celebrated the event in Cua Viet bedecked by a sea of red-and-blue flags. In their positions, PLAF regulars discussed with local guerillas a plan for Tet festivities.

"Saigon paratroopers camping South of Thanh Hoi village had asked for permission to come over and visit our area. Prompted by the spirit of national concord we agreed on conditions that they strictly abided by the Paris Agreement.

"However at the very moment when they were warmly received by our military men and civilians, a coup was mounted by Thieu's marines along the sea cost south of Cua Viet.

A number of Saigon military "visitors" planted in our territory three-stripe flags they had hidden in their pockets.

"This base scheme was seen through in time by our vigilant fighters of sub-unit N° 3 who tried to talk them into removing the things. But they took our attitude for one of weakness and became more truculent. Some of them went the length of pulling off our flags, while a number of tanks belonging to the Saigon armoured regiments N° 17 and 20 rushed against the positions of our sub-units N° 1 and 3 on the sea side. Our men erected a line of red and blue flags in an effort to check them. Many fighters of ours signalled to them to stop, but by orders of their officers the Saigon tanks went around in the water just to bypass our barrier of flags, then moved on upwards. More insolently they shelled our positions with guns on their tanks, while marine battalions N° 4 and 5 took advantage of the confusion to advance.

"It was now clear that they paid no heed to our calls for peace and preferred a fight. A pow-wow was at once held by the command of the unit and marching orders were quickly issued. Guns of the Ben Hai unit immediately went into action and zeroed in at the enemy cluster of tanks and armoured vehicles. As soon as the din of artillery subsided, tanks of sub-unit N° 1 of Bac Son unit, under the command of famous deputy chief Luc Vinh Tuong rumbled up, and after surpassing Height 12, fired at two enemy M.18s, knocking them out of action. Infantry company 2, a hero unit, now received the order to join in the fray. Our fighters could not suppress their anger on seeing the big red-and-blue flag over the port area riddled with bullets. Everyone was ready to confront the enemy. Meanwhile, further South, artillery sub-unit under the command of deputy chief Nguyen Huu Den had their view blocked. Den, who had been at the head of his sub-unit fighting valiantly in Quang Tri town, then hit on a bold idea: he urged all his comrades to look for a suitable terrain where to plant the ordnance pieces, then fired them point blank at, and wiped out, three M.113s in no time.

"Beaten hollow, the Saigon troops took to their heels. In their stampede not a few even left their tanks with engines still roaring. But our main force units and guerillas gradually tightened their noose around them, and by the afternoon of January 31, the fighting had come to an end."

Cuong made a pause now, completely relaxed, then resumed his story, tracing with his ball-pen a small circle on his map.

"This battle took an enemy toll of several hundred killed and over 100 tanks of all kinds burnt down. Ten tanks were captured intact. Hundreds of Saigon soldiers bearing badges of the "Mad buffaloes," "Sea Eagles" (of armoured Regiments N° 18 and 20) surrendered."

I listened to Commander Cuong's story while looking at his map placed under a plastic sheet: from Dao Dau, An Tru down to Ngo Xa Dong close to Highway 68, liberated areas with a dense population were marked by a red pencil and looked like small red roses.

The shelter was suddenly lighted up by a golden sunray. The rumble of an engine was heard. From the seaside came two big boats which had now entered the river mouth. They were filled with farmers from Trieu Phong and Hai Lang coming back from their evacuation places to Cua Viet.

The port was returning to life. A new joy was stirring our combatants who pledged not to lay down their guns, even for a minute, and to always stand by!

THANH XUAN

Magnificent success in the fraternal friendship between the DRVN and the GDR

AT the invitation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee and of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a delegation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Government of the German Democratic Republic led by Comrade Willi Stoph, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the German Democratic Republic, paid a friendship visit to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam from March 15 to 19, 1973.

During its stay in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the Party and Government delegation of the German Democratic Republic attended the grand meeting held by the population of Hanoi capital; visited the Hanoi capital and Haiphong port city, and a number of economic and cultural establishments; and met with representatives of the people of different strata, and the representatives of the combatants of the Viet Nam People's Army. The Vietnamese people reserved their warmest and most cordial welcome for the delegation wherever it went. This is a shining manisfestation of the militant solidarity and fraternal friendship between the peoples of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and of the German Democratic Republic.

The delegation was cordially received by Mr Ton Duc Thang, President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and Mr Le Duan, First Secretary of the Viet Nam Workers' Party Central Committee.

The Party and Government delegation of the German Democratic Republic had an official meeting with Nguyen Van Tien, Head of the Special Representation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, discuss with the Delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Government of the Democratic of Viet Nam on the new situation of the Vietnamese people's revolutionary struggle, on the consolidation of the friendship and of the relations of fraternal co-operation between the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany as well as between the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the German Democratic Republic, and on other questions of mutual concern for the two sides.

The talks took place in the joy of victory and in an atmosphere of solidarity and friendship. The two sides' unanimity of views on all questions raised has been expressed in the joint communiqué issued on March 3 1973.

After hailing the brilliant victories recorded by the Vietnamese people under the leadership of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Government of the DRVN, the joint communiqué said:

"... The Party and Government delegation of the German Democratic Republic warmly hails the stand of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the authentic representative of the South Vietnamese people, which stand consists in strictly respecting and scrupulously implementing the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

The delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the delegation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and of the Government of the German Democratic Republic severely condemn the Saigon administration, which, with the permission of the government of the United States, has deliberately and systematically violated the most important and most urgent provisions of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, and has run counter to the most ardent aspirations of the South Vietnamese people, namely peace, independence, democracy, and national reconciliation and concord.

The two parties firmly demand that the US government and the Saigon administration immediately end all acts of violation and sabotage of the Agreement, and strictly respect and scrupulously implement all its provisions.

The Party and Government delegation of the German Democratic Republic warmly welcomes the successes recorded by the Vietnamese people in the strengthening of socialism in all respects, and affirms that the principled stand of the German Democratic Republic is to resolutely support the Vietnamese people in the struggle for the strict respect and scrupulous implementation of the Paris Agreement, in the building of socialism in North Viet Nam as well as in the struggle to achieve independence and democracy in South Viet Nam and to proceed to the peaceful reunification of the Fatherland. The delegation expresses its particular appreciation of the National Front for Liberation and of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, affirms the disire to continue to develop the good relations between the Socialist Unity of Germany and the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation, between the Government of the German Democratic Republic and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam...

The delegation of Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam sincerely thanks the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Government and people of the German Democratic Republic which, right from the outset, have severely condemned the US imperialists' criminal aggression and reserved for the Vietnamese people their warm support and devoted aid in the spirit of proletarian internationalism. Together with that accorded by the other brother socialist countries, the support and asistance from the German Democratic Republic constitutes a powerful encouragment for the Vietnamese people and is one of the indispensable factors of their great victory. The delegation of the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam expreses its sincere joy at the remarkable successes recorded in all fields by the fraternal people of the German Democratic Republic in the building of socialism under the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany which has creatively applied the principles of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions of the German Democratic Republic. The latter has incessantly strengthened in all respects. The material and cultural living standard of its people has not ceased to improve. The diplomatic victories they have recorded bear a major political significance and raise the international position of the German Democratic Republic...

The two parties discuss measures to support the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in solving the aftermaths of the war, in speeding up the building of socialism and expanding the relations of economic scientific and technical co-operation.

The friendship visit of the delegation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Government of the German Democratic Republic to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam constitutes a living demonstration of the friendship and fraternal solidarity, and opens a new stage in the co-operation between the Viet Nam Workers' Party and the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, beween the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the German Democratic Republic.

US rec planes transgress DRVN's air space

THE spokesman of the DRVN Foreign Ministry on March 15 issued the following statement:

"At 10.40 a.m. on March 12, 1973, 2 US jet planes, in violation of the air space of the DRVN, reconnoitred Cua Tung rivermouth and Vinh Ha, Vinh Thai and Vinh Nam communes in Vinh Linh region, and Dong Hoi town — the capital of Quang Binh province..

At 1 p.m. the following day another US aircraft flew a reconnaissance mission along the coast of the DRVN from Vinh Linh to Thanh Hoa province. These US acts were infringements on the DRVN's sovereignty and territory and blatant violations of Article 2 of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, according to which the United States must cease all military activities against the territory of the DRVN on the ground, in the air or from the sea.

They were also serious attempts of sabotage against the Paris Agreement, which the United States and the Saigon administration themselves have signed with the DRVN Government and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, and which has been endorsed by the Paris International Conference on Viet Nam."

Were they indications of the "good will" much publicised by the White House, the Pentagon and US Secretary of State W. Rogers?

We strongly protest this crude breach of the Paris Agreement, for whose consequences the US must bear full responsibility.

The people of South Viet Nam, once again, require the US to live up to its commitments by, first of all, putting an end to all encroachments upon the sovereignty and territory of the DRVN.

The DRVN Army ready to smash any US military adventures

On the occasion of the founding anniversary of the NUFK and PNLAFK (March 23)

Great strides of the Cambodian Revolution

THREE years ago, Cambodia was at an important turning point. It was when the US imperialists realized that their financial "aid", provocations and military pressure from both Thailand and South Viet Nam borders, and the CIA subversive schemes were no more effective in compelling the peace-loving and neutral Cambodia to change its line. It was also when many substantial gains of the anti-US fight for national salvation of the Vietnamese and Lao peoples induced Washington to believe that "neutral Cambodia has became a thorn in the US flash", and that "the crime of the people and government of the Kingdom of Cambodia is their refusal to become a satellite country, a base for aggression of the US"; this belief became intolerable to the new government in the United States.

Now, there is no more doubt that the March 18' 1970 coup d'état in Phnom Penh was staged under the direct command of the CIA, in the hope of turning this Kingdom into a new-type colony of the US, and, in the immediate future, into a base against the rising revolutionary movement of national liberation on the Indochinese peninsula, more specifically in the hope of preventing the patriotic forces in South Viet Nam from winning the great successes which were in sight at that moment. Therefore, right after the March 18, 1970 coup d'état, the US imperialists wire-pulled their client administrations from Saigon, Bangkok, Phnom Penh to Vientiane into hurriedly setting up alliances and giving each other assistance under a counter-revolutionary scheme and realising a regional alliance in accordance with "the Nixon doctrine" in a bid "to check the tide of communism."

Right from that moment, this odious US design was put into effect. At the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples, the patriotic forces of the three Indochinese peoples described "it as a new adventurous step of the US imperialists, which would be foiled by the resistances of the three peoples united against their common enemy." The reality of the past three years in Cambodia as well as in Viet Nam and Laos has substantiated the forecast.

In Cambodia, in face of the threat to national survival sovereignty and unity, the people have chosen the path of armed struggle against the domination by the US and the Lon Nol—Sirik Matak clique of traitors. The fraternal Cambodian people, led by the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK) under Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk, and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia with Samdech Penn Nouth as Prime Minister and Mr Khieu Samphan as Deputy Prime Minister, have been credited with ever greater military, political and diplomatic achievements. The Cambodian People's Liberation Armed Forces were born in the national liberation fight and have rapidly grown up. They have constantly held the initiative in action and driven the Phnom Penh army of the US onto the defensive. In the past three years, though the US and the Saigon administration have done their hardest to beef it up, the Phnom Penh army has been critically decimated by the tens of thousands; all the main communication lines have been under constant fire or cut off by the patriotic forces. The stranglehold around Phnom Penh has been continuously tightened, and the position of the traitors has grown ever more precarious.

The US imperialists hoped to turn Cambodia into a staging base for their aggression against its neighbouring countries. But in fact they have opened a new front where they have been getting bogged down ever deeper.

They intended to pit the Khmer against the Khmer. But in face of foreign aggression and the heinous war crimes committed by the aggressors, the Khmer have been brought together under the national salvation banner of the National United Front of Kampuchea and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia. Buddhist monks and believers, members of the Royal family as well as masses of peasants, workers and intellectuals in the cities, the liberated areas as well as the areas still under the enemy have opted for the anti-US resistance for national salvation as the only safe path to survival and development. The longer and the fiercer the sacred resistance war is, the more tempered, broadened and consolidated the national united bloc is.

With the March 1970 coup d'état the US imperialists planned to put Cambodia back in colonial bondage. But they have met with a strong opposition. In the liberated areas which make up ninety per cent of the whole territory with a population of five and a half million, the people have become real masters of their destiny. The long standing progressive and patriotic elements in the Cambodian society bringing into full play their active role in the past three years have been instrumental in generating unprecedented great revolutionary changes in Cambodian society. A new independent and self-reliant economy and a progressive national culture have rapidly taken shape there, as forerunners of a new Cambodia.

In other parts of the Indochinese peninsula, the US imperialists' wicked scheme has fared no better. They have tried to revive old feuds between the nations in an attempt to play off the Indochinese against the Indochinese. A typical instance of this was the gruesome massacre of Vietnamese residents in Cambodia right after the March pustch. However, faced with the US imperialists' aggressive manoeuvres the Indochinese peoples have closed their ranks and lent each other stronger support and assistance than ever before. In the resistance of the people of each country against the common enemy, the time-honoured fraternal friendship and good neighbourliness have finely developed into an unshakable and close militant solidarity. The Indochinese people have always shared weal and woe and the gains made by one country not only constitute a great encouragement but also a contribution to those of the others. Never before have the peoples on this peninsula been so closely united as they are today, by a militant comradeship tempered in the crucible of war and steadily enhanced.

Cambodia has not become a springboard for US aggression. Meanwhile the liberated areas of the three countries relying on each other have turned into a solid base of the Indochinese resistance war.

If every year this day is for the US imperialists an occasion to review the bitter lessons of their costly adventures, it also proffers an occasion for the peoples in Cambodia and Indochina to appraise their successes so as to further strengthen their conviction and to advance.

The South Vietnamese people are always proud to be a friend of the Khmer nation, a staunch anti-imperialist nation. We are very happy to be a neighbour of the beautiful and rich Kingdom of Cambodia which has a tradition of friendliness and loves peace. We are also proud and happy to stand side by side the Cambodian people right in their first days of adversity, to wholeheartedly sympathize and support the sacred fight for the liberation of their Fatherland. No matter how the situation will develop, the South Vietnamese people, under the leadership of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam will carry out with might and main their internationalist obligation, namely to support the Cambodian people's fight waged under the clearsighted leadership of the National United Front of Kampuchea and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia till total victory.

Together with the peoples of the other countries in Indochina and the world, we fully support the soundline of the Cambodian people, expounded in the January 26 and 28, 1973 statements of the National United Front of Kampuchea and the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia. The Cambodia issue must be settled on the basis of the March 23, 1970 five-point declaration of Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk.

On this occasion, we extend to our Cambodian brothers our warmest congratulations on their successes and wish them new and still more splendid ones.

LE MINH

A BUMPER CROP

Happy tidings from the battlefront were fast spreading to the villages. Drum-beating and flag-carrying villagers turned out, in a universal festive mood. With open arms they welcomed the revolutionary fighters to their houses to have dinner with them.

The sun sank behind rows of sugar palms when the troops finished clearing the battlefield. On their way back to base, they did not expect such a crowd of cheering people. Several hundreds persons, old and young, lined various footpaths. Nothing indeed could match the love and affection of every one for the revolutionary fighting men.

"It's a real people's army!" exclaimed an old man. The inhabitants now came to realize that the resistance fighters fought to protect the people without expecting any special privilege, without encroaching upon anything in the way of people's property, in sharp contrast with the Lon Nol troops and Saigon soldiers who pillaged everything they could lay hands on.

The celebrations of the Route 6 victory of the armed forces and people of Kompong Thom were held that evening in the midst of a bumper rice harvest. The local inhabitants commemorated their success in production in the habitual way.

From rows of houses on stilts came the rhythmic rice pestling of the young girls. Mothers and sisters made all kinds of cakes for the Liberation fighters. The farmers brought food and gifts to their combat positions. Unlike the previous times, apart from meat, chickens, dried fish, cakes and fruit, there were hundreds of parcels of "com" prepared from near-ripe glutinous rice. Mother Xa Ran who was keeping company with the armymen told them: We have just brought in an abundant rice crop and you one of military feats. Eat well to fight well!"

The party held right on the combat site was very merry and intimate. Every member of Company 2 could feel the special affection and care shown them by the womenfolk.

That same evening, at the Chantransey pagoda, the inhabitants of Sorey Smaki village held similar festivities. The Buddhist monks personally went out to invite representatives of various PLAF units to the party. Squad leader Khieu Heat and several fighting men were delegated by Unit X. In a combat action that morning. Khieu Heat's squad had repelled 6 successive waves of enemy assaults. Heat himself was responsible for 14 enemy casualties. This 25-year old man of Samtuk, also in Kompong Thom province, had left the ricefields for the army only 6 months ago. Yet he already had 9 victories to his credit. A man of few words, modest and shy, Heat easily lushed to the roots of his hair each time his comrades teased him.

The yard of the pagoda was full of people. Young men and women, in pairs, danced merrily. Everybody brought along a bunch of bananas and a parcel of "com". The young man would peel a banana, stuff it with "com" and offer it to his partner before he had his own. In a corner of the pagoda, a pair sat, their backs against a date palm, watching the moon and softly singing a traditional song (Bok Longco pounding rice) for such occasions.

The party not yet over, Khieu Heat and his men already had to take leave. The Head bonze, 86, stepped forward and extended his best wishes to them. "The celebrations of the battle and production successes to-night," he said, "were attended by the very ones who have just given the enemy a serious beating. I wish the revolutionary army more victories. The Lon Nol-Sirik Matak gang of US-paid agents should be wiped out soon so that peace can return to the pagoda and the people." An "Achar," or lay assistant, spoke next. In Cambodia, an "Achar" is an important man in a pagoda appointed by the bonzes. Selected among the village elders, he is thoroughly versed in Buddhism, command a good general knowledge and a high esteem among villagers. Tonight his voice was full of poise.

"We are celebrating the victory of our army," he said, "but we should always bear in mind that the enemy is very cunning. To keep pace with the armymen, let us produce more rice for the Resistance. At this juncture, rice is gold. We should not let it fall into the hands of the anti-religious Lon Nol clique."

Then, he handed over gifts from the pagoda to each combatant. Pairs of young men and women and others moved along, presenting the armymen with bananas, "com" and cakes. Khieu Heat found it hard to accept all the many, many presents.

On his way back, he felt deeply moved by the warm sentiments that bound the people and the revolutionary armed forces. As National PLAF fighters, he thought to himself, they must do everything to deserve the people's sollicitude, to bring festivities to all corners of the land.

THACH HAN

1st session of the consultative conference between two South Viet Nam parties

A consultative conference between the two South Viet Nam parties was held on March 19 at the castle La Celle Saint Cloud near Paris. The delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam is headed by Prof. Nguyen Van Hieu, Minister of State.

Speaking at the session, Minister Nguyen Van Hieu pointed out: "There is still over a week that foreign troops will be withdrawn completely from South Viet Nam. For the first time, in over a century now, there will be no foreign aggressor on the territory of Viet Nam. This is a joy and pride of the entire Vietnamese nation, from North to South and of all political tendencies. This allows the South Vietnamese people to realize their genuine right to self-determination without foreign interference."

"At present, the aspiration of the South Vietnamese people is the end of all hostilities, the maintenance of peace and a stabilized life. But the Saigon administration has allsidedly, systematically and seriously violated the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam," Minister Nguyen Van Hieu emphasized.

"Until now, in South Viet Nam gunshots continue to sound, the people still cannot stabilize their life nor enjoy the democratic liberties, even the most elementary ones such as freedom of residence, freedom of movement and earning their living. The Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of Control and Supervision cannot carry out their activities normally. Obviously, the responsibility for this situation does not fall on our side."

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu continued:

"The Consultative Conference between the Two South Vietnamese parties imposes the important task of settling the internal affairs of South Viet Nam in accordance with the principles and content ot the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord.

We believe that the division among our people has stemmed from foreign aggression. Now that this aggression has ended, it is important to make realize great national union and concord, to end hatred and enmity, to prohibit all reprisals and discrimination against persons or organizations that have collaborated with one party or the other. National concord is a tradition of the Vietnamese nation. We want to bring about concord throughout South Viet Nam, within every family, every village, so that every family can be reunited and every village can enjoy a happy life.

National concord can be realized only when the exercise of all democratic freedoms is ensured. It is important that the people no longer have to live under pressure and coercion, that they can leave the places where they were relocated and return to their native villages and enjoy the freedom of movement and residence. It is important that political organizations may freely carry out their activities, that persons detained for political reasons be set free, that newspapers be free to appear and express their opinions.

It is on the basis of national reconciliation and concord and the guarantee of democratic freedoms for the population that the two South Vietnamese parties will reach an agreement on the formation of a national council of national reconciliation and concord with three equal components and of councils at various levels. It is also on this basis that we will reach an agreement on the organization of free and democratic general elections which will allow the South Viet Nam people to decide themselves their political future.

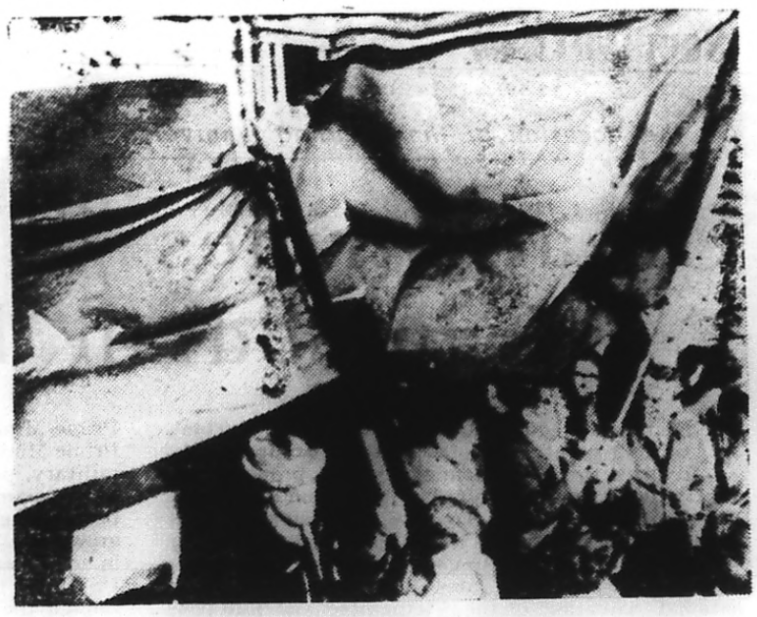
We must settle the internal affairs of South Viet Nam in conformity with the realities recognized by the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, namely the existence in South Viet Nam of two administrations, two armies, two zones of control and three essential political forces. Everybody knows that the existence of two administrations only bears a provisional character and that the path to follow is to do in such a way through the formation of a three-segment national council of national reconciliation and concord and through free and democratic general elections, that there will be in South Viet Nam only one truly democratic administration. However, in the process leading to such a settlement, every signatory of the Paris Agreement has the obligation to strictly respect this reality. That is why, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam has agreed with your side on opening this consultative conference in a spirit of equality, mutual respect and reciprocal non-elimination. While carrying out these consultations here, we attach a very great importance to persons with political and religious tendencies who are neither on our side nor on yours, but who aspire to peace, independence and national concord. These forces must play a role in the political life in South Viet Nam. They must be free to carry out their activities and voice their opinions. Only in this way can they contribute to the settlement of the internal political problems of South Viet Nam and to the exercise of national reconciliation and concord."

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu concluded: With goodwill and a constructive attitude, with frankness and readiness in mind, our delegation is prepared to discuss with your side so as to rapidly reach an agreement on the internal affairs of South Viet Nam. We wish that you will do the same, for this is the only way not to betray the trust and expectations of our countrymen.

For his part, Mr Nguyen Luu Vien, head of the Saigon delegation, delivered a speech distorting the history of struggle against foreign invaders of the Vietnamese nation.

He tried to plead for the United States, slandered the sacred war of resistance against US aggression, for national salvation of our people as "a war waged by the communists" "caused by the North aggression against the South."

Minister Nguyen Van Hieu severely refuted all the slanderous and distorting allegations of the Saigon administration. He pointed out that they are wrong to the Vietnamese nation, the reality in South Viet Nam, the letters and spirit of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and the spirit of national reconciliation and concord."



The people all over the world share with us the joy of peace

Minister Nguyen Thi Binh leaves Paris

After fulfilling her mission at the Paris Conference on Viet Nam and the International Conference on Viet Nam, Mme Nguyen Thi Binh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, on March 16, 1973 left Paris.

In the few days before her departure, diplomatic corps of many fraternal countries, representatives of democratic parties and mass organizations in France and Western European countries, many French, West European and American personalities, many peace fighters in France, Italy, West Germany, Britain, the USA and masses of Vietnamese residents in France sent letters, cables and flowers to Minister Nguyen Thi Binh expressing their wishes for new successes to the South Vietnamese people and asking her to convey their warm greetings to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

Present at the airport to see Minister Nguyen Thi Binh off were Minister Xuan Thuy, head of the DRVN delegation to the Paris Conference on Viet Nam, Messrs Dang Viet Chau, head of the DRVN delegation to the DRVN—US Joint Economic Commission, Dinh Ba Thi, deputy-head of the RSVN PRG delegation to the Consultative Conference between the two South Vietnamese parties, Pham Van Ba, director of the RSVN Information Bureau in France, and Vo Van Sung, general delegate of the DRVN Government in France, representatives of the CC of the Communist Party, and Socialist Party, of mass organizations, and many French and foreign newsmen in France.

Mr Delatour Dupin, head of Protocol Department *ad int.* of the French Minisry of Foreign Affairs was on hand.

All the members of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Residents' General Association, representatives of different Vietnamese residents' organizations, many Vietnamese oversea personalities and hundreds of Vietnamese residents' families were also present at the airport to bid farewell to Minister Nguyen Thi Binh.

Speaking to the newsmen at the airport, Minister Nguyen Thi Binh expressed the gratitude for the warm sentiments of the French people and the assistance of the French government in the past years. She affirmed the correct stand of the RSVN PRG to fully respect and strictly implement the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and to resolutely struggle to compel the US government and the Saigon administration to do the same.

Minister Nguyen Thi Binh said that the RSVN PRG will continue its foreign policy of consolidating and developing relations of friendship and collaboration with all countries and international organizations, and in the near future appoint observers to the United Nations and the UN Bureau in Geneva.

SUOI VIET NAM CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION